

By Russ Pankonin, The Imperial Republican Co-Publisher

When I think about the Imperial Community Foundation Fund, it reminds me of the Bible teaching that refers to faith and the mustard seed—that even with faith as small as a mustard seed, nothing is impossible and great things can be achieved.

In retrospect, the Imperial Community Foundation Fund was nothing more than a mustard seed when it was formed 11 years ago as an affiliate of the Nebraska Community Foundation. And with some faith, dedication and hard work, some great things have already been achieved.

From a meager beginning in 2000, the revenue of the foundation fund has eclipsed nearly three-quarters of a million dollars over the past 10 years.

The reinvestment of foundation proceeds represents an even more impressive accomplishment.

During the last 10 years, the foundation has funded project requests totaling more than \$175,000 and has distributed scholarship funds in excess of \$20,000.

In 2007, the community rallied to match a \$50,000 challenge grant that required an additional \$150,000 in local match contributions.

This also came during a time when more than \$1 million was raised to enlarge the public library in Imperial.

As you can see, charitable giving remains alive and well here. But as you’ve heard me say many times before: you either move forwards or backwards—there’s no in between.

That’s true with the Imperial Community Foundation Fund as well. There’s still plenty of work to be done. While we feel we’ve made great strides, the small community of Shickley, population 334, has set the bar high for other communities to model. Their unrestricted foundation funds now total more than \$1.5 million.

In 2005, the Imperial Community Foundation Fund advisory committee set a goal of reaching a \$1 million milestone in unrestricted funds by 2015. The Chase County Hospital Foundation has set a similar goal. If it’s like many other goals here, those two milestones will be reached.

Financial gifts to local foundations help insure the future of the Imperial community for many years to come. As we approach Thanksgiving and look back on the many blessings we’ve enjoyed this past year, one way to express that thanks is through a charitable gift—the Imperial Community Foundation Fund and the Chase County Hospital Foundation both come to mind as worthy recipients.

Both focus on improving the quality of life we enjoy here and your contribution will be an investment in the future of our community.